

Message Text

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44

ACTION DHA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-09 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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----- 068384

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4410

INS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DEA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

FT HOLABIRD IMMEDIATE

DIRECTOR FBI IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANKOK

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USMISSION UN UNEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS KUALA LUMPUR 4994

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 1 AND 2)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREG, MY

SUBJECT: URGENT BOAT CASE: BACKGROUND TO BIO CALBES ON VIETNAMESE

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REFUGEES ABOARD "VINH THUAN" (NO. 0072)

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 4352 (NOTAL), (B) KUALA LUMPUR 4535 (NOTAL),
(C) KUALA LUMPUR 4888 (NOTAL), (D) KUALA LUMPUR 4928 (NOTAL),
(E) KUALA LUMPUR 4930 (NOTAL), (F) KUALA LUMPUR 4965 (NOTAL)
(G) KUALA LUMPUR 2930 (NOTAL)

1. THIS MESSAGE CONVEYS BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO BE READ
IN CONJUNCTION WITH BIO CALBES REGARDING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES
INTERVIEWED AT KEMAMAN AUGUST 29, 1976. POST REITERATES
UTMOST URGENCY IN EARLY DETERMINATION ELIGIBILITY FOR
PAROLE ITO U.S.

2. HAVING PLANNED AND SAVED MONEY AND GASOLINE FOR OVER A
YEAR, A GROUP OF 93 REFUGEES DEPARTED FROM SAIGON JULY 20,
1976, IN A 19 METERS LONG AND 3.4 METERS WIDE FISHING BOAT.
THE BOAT, CALLED "VINH THUAN" AND NUMBERED 0072, ARRIVED
AT KUALA TRENGGANU, MALAYSIA, ON JULY 25, AFTER SAILING THROUGH
BAD WEATHER AND ROUGH SEAS. AT THE TIME OF ARRIVAL, THE
REFUGEES HAD NOT EATEN FOR RTREE DAYS AND WERE OUT OF WATER.
ONE OF THE REFUGEES HAD GIVEN BIRTH TWO DAYS OUT OF SAIGON,
SO THAT 94 PERSONS LANDED. THE MALAYSIA AUTHORITIES ARRANGED
FOR THE MOTHER AND BABY AND SEVERAL OTHER SICK PERSONS TO
BE HOSPITALIZED IN KUALA TRENGGANU. THE REST OF THE
REFUGEES WERE KEPT ON THE BOAT UNTIL AUGUST 5, WHEN THEY WERE
TRANSPORTED TO A RELATIVELY ISOLATED SPOT ON THE SHORE AT
KEMEMAN (90 MILES SOUTH OF KUALA TRENGGANU AND ABOUT 225
MILES BY ROAD FROM KUALA LUMPUR), WHERE A NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE
REFUGEES WHO HAD ARRIVED EARLIER WERE LOCATED.

3. THE EMBASSY LEARNED OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE 94 FROM A JULY 26
NEWSPAPER ARTICLE. WE EXPRESSED IMMEDIATE INTEREST IN
OBTAINING INFORMATION ON THIS GROUP FROM UNHCR AND GOM
AUTHORITIES WHILE TRYING TO ESTABLISH THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE
UNHCR WOULD ACT AS A CLEARINGHOUSE FOR ALL REFUGEES.
AFTER REPEATED UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION
ON THIS GROUP FROM GOM AND UNHCR, WE WERE INFORMED BY
MFA ON AUGUST 27 THAT THE BOAT WOULD BE REPAIRED AND
"ALLOWED TO CONTINUE ON ITS JOURNEY" IMMINENTLY.
ON AUGUST 28 THE MFA TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE BOAT WAS
TO BE PUT TO SEA ON AUGUST 30.
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4. IN VIEW OF THIS NEW URGENCY AND FAILURE TO OBTAIN
INFORMATION EXCEPT BY OUR OWN INITIATIVE, THE EMBASSY SENT
AN OFFICER TO KEMAMAN AUGUST 29 TO INTERVIEW THE ENTIRE
GROUP. HE DISCOVERED ON HIS ARRIVAL THAT ONE OF THE
ORIGINAL 94 HAD BEEN VISITED BY A RELATIVE AND TAKEN TO
HONG KONG, THUS THE TOTAL IS NOW 93. THE OTHERS WERE
LIVING ON THE DFACH IN TENTS AND PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE

FOOD AND OTHER SUPPLIES BY BOTH GOM AND LOCAL FISHERMEN. THEY SEEMD TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH AND, ALTHOUGH AWARE THAT THEY MIGHT BE PUT BACK ON THEIR BOAT AT ANY TIME, THEY DID NOT SEEM UNDULY ALARMED, PROBABLY BECAUSE THE VISIT OF THE EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVE GAVE THEM HEART THAT THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY BE SENT TO THE U.S. (THE EMBOFF MADE IT CLEAR THAT ANY DECISION ON THEIR FUTURE WOULD BE MADE ONLY IN WASHINGTON. HE DID NOT INDICATED WHO AMONG THE GROUP MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PAROLE PROGRAM.) MOST OF THE GRUP ARE VIETNAMESE OF CHINESE DESCENT AND THEY ALL CITED REPRESSION AND LOSS OF FREEDOM IN VIETNAM AS THRI MOTIVE FOR FLEEING THE COUNTRY AT GREAT RISK TO THEIR LIVES.

5. LOCAL GOM OFFICIALS SAID THAT, WHILE THEY HAD RECEIVED A DIRECTIVE FROM THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL IN KUALA LUMPUR THAT THE REFUGEES WERE TO BE PUT BACK ON THEIR BOAT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, THE BOAT, ALTHOUGH REPARSED, WAS STILL IN KUALA TRANGGANU AND THEY HAD RECEIVED NO ORDER TO MOVE THE BOAT.

5. PROSPECTS FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT IN MALAYSIA APPEAR NEGLIGIBLE. AS NOTED IN PREVIOUS REPORTING (REF G AND SUBSEQUENT) MALAYSIANS HAVE ACCEPTED OVER A THOUSAND CAMBODIAN MUSLIMS FOR RESETTLEMENT BUT HAVE SHOWN NO RPT NO RPT NO DISPOSITION ACCEPT NON-MUSLIM VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. INDEED, EVENTS OF PAST WEEKEND RAISE CLEAR PROSPECT THAT THESE REFUGEES WILL BE PUT OUT TO SEA IN THEIR BOAT IF RESETTLEMENT PLANS ARE NOT MADE FOR THEM SOON.
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